I. Introduction to Corinth and 1 Corinthians

I am happy to dedicate this commentary to two of my colleagues at the Palmer (formerly Eastern) Seminary of Eastern University: Ronald J. Sider and Samuel Escobar.

This commentary is meant to serve the needs of pastors and other students of the Bible. Although I include documentation for interested students to follow up, especially on otherwise difficult-to-trace claims about the ancient world, the focus is Paul's message and its value for readers today. I currently am organizing my research for a scholarly commentary on 1 Corinthians, but even my background notes for it already run to over seven times the space available for this commentary. Space constraints thus permit only cursory treatments of passages and documentation. (Nevertheless, although this is not the "scholarly" version, I hope that even scholars will find points of value here, especially ancient parallels to Paul's argumentation.)

We hear in Paul's correspondence his intimate and sometimes difficult pastoral relationship with the Corinthians. But whereas some principles he articulates seem straightforward, much sounds foreign to modern ears. Paul affirms the value of singleness in part because the end is near (1 Cor 7:26, 29); head coverings in part because of the angels (11:10) or because nature supports them (11:14); and the resurrection body in part on the analogy of heavenly "bodies" like the stars or moon. All of these arguments made sense for Paul's contemporaries, but modern readers find them difficult to apply directly. Yet if some readers' approach of simplistic, direct application is problematic, so is an approach that judges Paul unfit for modern readers based on modern criteria. Both approaches are anachronistic and culturally insensitive.

What is the value of two-thousand-year-old letters for today? Ancient writings in general reveal the underpinnings of much of modern intellectual thought, and often provide surprisingly contemporary critiques of analogous intellectual options available in our own era. Although their science is outdated, readers can profit from the ethical reflections of ancient philosophers and rabbis.

For those in the Christian tradition (presumably those most commonly interested in New Testament (NT) commentaries), we also stand in a tradition that claims to hear in a particular canon of texts God's message to the church. The NT canon includes not only biographic narratives about a salvation event, but other works, including samples of apostolic teaching to churches, such as Paul's letters. On these premises Christians may grant that God gave Paul wisdom to address the issues of his day. Yet even granting this, how do we translate his message in a manner relevant for our sometimes different issues today? Understanding the issues Paul addressed helps us better grasp the broader narrative of his conflict with the Corinthians, a narrative that, in addition to elements particular to ancient Corinth, reveals the sort of human interaction faced by most churches today. Observing how he applies his gospel to concrete situations provides us a model for how to reapply this gospel to other situations.

Although complete understanding of the particulars of Paul's advice to the Corinthians may elude us, much of the message of this apostle to the Gentiles challenges contemporary churches today. We could learn from him in matters such as mutual support versus competition; humility and sacrifice versus pursuit of status; marital fidelity; caring for the needy and rejecting materialism; spiritual gifts and their appropriate use for serving others; the value and sanctity of the body; and future accountability for present actions. In these letters we glimpse traces of Paul's ecstatic encounters with Jesus and an experience of the Spirit in early Christianity that is at once both strange and inviting to most modern Christians. Least often noted in "doctrinal" approaches but perhaps most characteristic of Paul (and some other ancient letter writers) is an intimate relationship between Paul and his churches that (once we account for different cultural approaches) offers some pastoral models today.

Some are tempted to read Paul's missionary enterprise in light of later colonialism. This is, however, a serious and anachronistic misreading of the first-century Paul. He advanced the cause of a tiny, persecuted minority; like many majority world ministers a half century ago, he belonged to a people subjugated by a colonial empire. It was largely through Paul's efforts that ethical monotheism became deeply grounded in, and eventually supplanted the polytheism of, much of the Western world. But monotheism was a largely Jewish notion, and Paul, following the lead of Diaspora Jews before him, had to strike the right balance between his ancient prophetic message, on the one hand, and, on the other, pastoral sensitivity to his Gentile converts. His synthesis offers a useful pastoral model today, especially if we understand the cultural setting he addressed.

PROPOSED BACKGROUNDS

Most proposed backgrounds for understanding the Corinthian correspondence contribute to our broader picture of the milieu, although some are more relevant than others.

Because mystery cults were by definition secretive and would hardly have been intimately known by Paul or all of his converts, the early-twentieth-century emphasis on mystery religions seems misplaced; they are one component among many constituting the religious milieu of the city. Corinth's status as a city with ports naturally invited a mixture of foreign religious elements, from Judaism to Egyptian cults (the latter increasing in the second century). But local Greco-Roman religion remained dominant, and the local Christians could not miss the temples and statues that filled their public places.

Although philosophic and other currents in Paul's day developed into Christian Gnosticism less than a century afterward, we lack secure evidence for Christian Gnosticism (in contrast to even many minor philosophers and orators) before the second century.[1] "Gnostic" elements and even the more commonly proposed emphasis on "overrealized eschatology" can be explained more simply by philosophic notions already prevalent in Greece. (Paul mentions eschatology in nearly every section, climaxing in Chapter 15, but this might counter Corinthians' Greek discomfort with eschatology rather than their emphasis on its realization.) Rabbinic Judaism provides a portrait of later developments in one strand of Palestinian Judaism (perhaps relevant to Paul's own background), but the Judaism of the Corinthian synagogue (cf. Acts 18:5–8) probably shared more in common with the Diaspora Judaism known from Asia Minor, Rome, and Egypt.[2]

Readings of the Corinthian correspondence today often stress social and rhetorical approaches. These are extremely valuable insofar as they follow concrete evidence. Sociological models must be used heuristically, hence adapted according to ancient Mediterranean evidence, but social history focuses on many questions that prove paramount in 1 Corinthians, especially the conflict between low- and high-status members.[3]

Because letters were not speeches and even later rhetorical handbooks treat them differently, rhetorical outlines of Paul's letters (as if they were handbook model speeches) are suspect.[4] But because Paul's letters, unlike most letters,

[1] For the most thoroughly "Gnostic" reading of 1 Corinthians, see W. Schmithals in the bibliography; one thorough refutation of pre-Christian Gnosticism is E. M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973).

[2] For Judaism in Asia Minor and Rome, see P. R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, SNTSMS 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960). For Egypt we have Philo; much of the so-called Pseudepigrapha; and an even larger collection of papyri. Knowledge of specifically Corinthian Judaism is more limited; on it, see I. Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, vol. 5 in The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 162–66.

[3] Earlier social approaches sometimes followed a Romanticist notion of the early Christian poor (e.g., S. J. Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity* [New York: Cooper Square, 1975; reprint of 1923 ed.]); this is corrected in more recent models (see Judge, Malherbe, Meeks and Theissen in the bibliography).

[4] See warnings in R. D. Anderson Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, rev. ed. (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, 18; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), esp. 114–17, 280

consist largely of argumentation, ancient rhetoric provides one of the most useful tools for analysis, because it structured formal patterns for argumentation. (The difference between Paul's and most ancient letters may be illustrated by their length; the average letters range from 18 to 209 words, although some writers such as Seneca tended to write longer moral epistles.[5] Shorter letters, like most papyri and most of Pliny's, were preferred.)[6]

Obvious rhetorical figures (such as anaphora) in Paul's letters prove that at the least he was familiar with pervasive speech conventions. It would be impossible to escape some exposure to rhetoric; it was one of two ancient forms of advanced education, and urban people heard its influence regularly at public events and in public places. One need not assume that Paul did tertiary study with a teacher of rhetoric to notice that his letters point to a Greco-Roman education in addition to studies in the Jewish Scriptures. He therefore must have been exposed to rhetoric, and his letters suggest that he developed rather than neglected what he learned. Corinthians of all classes encountered rhetoric in much entertainment and all legal and political discourse. Because most Corinthians would only hear Paul's letters read (and many would have been unable to read them), some consideration for rhetorical principles remains important.[7] The Corinthian Christians found his letters more compelling than his speech (2 Cor 10:10).

Many critics, however, felt that even spoken rhetoric should avoid excessive ornamentation,[8] and most expected letters to be even less weighted down with such ornament.[9] The excess of rhetorical devices in the Corinthian correspondence (esp. 1 Cor 1:12–13, 20, 26–28; also, e.g., 2 Cor 6:4–16) is therefore noteworthy. Local factors, in which rhetorical evaluation figured prominently (see 1 Cor 1:5, 17; 2:1–5; 2 Cor 10:10; 11:6), may help explain this emphasis, although other congregations also would have appreciated displays of learning (cf. Rom 5:3–5; 8:29–30, 35–39). Observing rhetorical devices helps us understand how Paul communicated in the idiom of his day, an essential prerequisite for anyone wishing to translate his ideas into other sociolinguistic settings.

(for 1 Corinthians in particular, 245–65); J. T. Reed, "The Epistle," 171–93 in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. S. E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997); S. Porter, "Paul of Tarsus and his Letters," in ibid., 541–61, 562–67, 584–85; J. A. D. Weima, "Epistolary Theory," 327–30 in *DNTB*, 329; idem, "Letters, Greco-Roman," 640–44 in ibid.; D. L. Stamps, "Rhetoric," 953–59 in ibid., 958. Cf. Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.36.

5 See, for example, R. Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory* (1999), 113.

6 Demetrius *Eloc.* 4.228. Given letters of such length, Paul may have even authored a draft first (cf., for example, Arrian *Alex.* 6.1.5).

7 The common estimate of 10 percent literacy in the Empire is probably too low for urban centers like Corinth, but letters of this length and language would require better than average literary skill.

8 For example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Dem.* 5, 6, 18 (admittedly an Atticist).

9 See Cicero *Fam.* 9.21.1; Seneca *Lucil.* 75.1–3; Marcus Aurelius 1.7; Weima, "Theory," 328 (although cf. differently A. J. Malherbe, "Ancient Epistolary Theorists," *OJRS* 5 [2, October 1977]: 17).

The other form of advanced education was philosophy. Basic education included learning the sayings of famous thinkers and leaders from the past, including not only philosophers but moralists influenced by them. Despite the conventional enmity between rhetoric and philosophy, educated people usually drew from both realms. Orators used themes from moral and political philosophy in their discourses, and sages needing more students may have practiced their art by declaiming in public places to whoever would listen. Although most educated people were not trained in a particular philosophic school, they considered an eclectic knowledge and use of philosophy integral to a good education. Stoic philosophy was among the more pervasive forms in this era, so we should not be surprised to find recurrent (though not pervasive) contacts with philosophy, particularly (albeit not exclusively) Stoicism, in the Corinthian correspondence. (Platonic influences, growing and later dominant among intellectuals, also appear.) Because early Christian meetings involved moral teaching, one way many outsiders would have viewed Christians was as a philosophic school.[10]

Luke's claim that Paul was from Tarsus and spent several years there as an adult might have helped explain to ancient readers his grasp of basic philosophic language, because Tarsus was long a center of philosophy (Strabo 14.5.13), although Paul apparently lived longer in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). Christians in centuries following Paul's letters to the Corinthians believed that the influence of pagan philosophy explained many of the attitudes of the Corinthians.[11]

Because Christian meetings lacked sacrifices and emphasized moral instruction, outsiders might view them more as a combination of a philosophic school, patronal banquets and (less acceptably) a religious association than a religious cult. (Gentile religion emphasized ritual and sacrifice, not moral instruction.) But, given their aniconic monotheism, basis in Scripture, and teachings on sexual matters, they would view them most closely in relation to Jewish associations, that is, synagogues (cf. Acts 18:4–8; sometimes to the embarrassment of local synagogue communities, Acts 18:12–13). God-fearers would be familiar with and new Gentile converts would become familiar with Jewish Scripture, which Paul quotes often.

ANCIENT LETTERS

A few comments on ancient letters (which in practice usually diverged from later handbooks' recommendations) are in order. Although the old distinction between letters and epistles is less emphasized today, it is important to note

[10] For example, S. K. Stowers, "Does Pauline Christianity Resemble a Hellenistic Philosophy?" 81–102 in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2001); cf. Acts 19:9.

[11] See Chrysostom *Hom. Cor., Proem*; Ambroasiaster *Commentary on Paul's Epistles, Proem*; Theodoret of Cyr *Comm. 1 Cor.* 163–64.

that Paul's extant letters are not pure letter-essays; although only Philemon is a purely personal letter, all the letters address concrete historical audiences. This is especially obvious in the Corinthian correspondence, in which Paul addresses at length a community of Christians he knew intimately.

Normally only literary letters were collected and published, and this practice was far more common in Rome than in the east. But later Christian communities that looked to the "apostle to the Gentiles" as their founder undoubtedly consulted with one another in collecting his letters as sample foundation documents that applied the apostolic message and ministry to particular situations.[12] Apart from "universal" paranesis and vice-lists, many philosophers (e.g., Seneca or even pseudepigraphic Cynic epistles) mixed apparently universal pronouncements with local applications. Similarly, we must read much in Paul's letters as a case study, a model for how he applied (and his successors can apply) the gospel to local situations. This seems particularly evident in much of the Corinthian correspondence.

The "occasional" nature of Paul's letters invites some interpretive observations. Ancient writers, like modern ones, typically assumed a measure of cultural and situational knowledge on the part of their audience.[13] Modern audiences can better understand the original letter if we can learn the implicit information the author shared with their audience without needing to articulate it explicitly. In contrast to those who think such concerns purely modern, sensitivity to writers' entire work (Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.20–21), style (Seneca *Lucil.* 108.24–25; Philost. *Hrk.* 11.5), genre (Menander Rhetor 1.1.333.31–334.5), and historical context (Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Thuc.* 29) also were ancient concerns.

CORINTH

Corinth had been a leading center of Greek power before the Romans subdued it in 146 B.C.E. (although, contrary to Roman propaganda, archaeology reveals that some Greeks continued to live there). In 44 B.C.E., Caesar refounded Corinth as a Roman colony.[14] Although excavations suggest that the indigenous population never completely abandoned the site, it was the new Roman presence that later writers recognized (e.g., Pausanias *Descr.* 2.1.2). Corinth's official, public life in Paul's day was Roman, as architecture and most inscriptions indicate.[15]

[12] Collecting the letters was probably less difficult than we suppose; a second copy was probably retained in addition to the one sent, and subsequent copies could be made (Cicero *Fam.* 7.25.1; *Att.* 13.29; *Ep. Brut.* 3.1 [2.2.1]; cf. Seneca *Lucil.* 99). In rare emergencies, one might even send two copies by different means (Cicero *Fam.* 11.11.1).

[13] For example, Dionysius *Dem.* 46; Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.22; Aulus Gellius *Noct. att.* 20.1.6.

[14] On its capture, see, for example, Polybius 39.2.–3.3; Virg. *Aen.* 6.836–837; perhaps even *Sib. Or.* 3.487–88; on its refounding, Strabo *Geogr.* 8.4.8; 8.6.23.

[15] See, for example, D. W. J. Gill, "Corinth: a Roman Colony in Achaea," *BZ* 37 (2, 1993): 259–64; D. Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 59.

Although many of the elite in Rome sought to imitate Greek ways, most of the elite in Corinth would seek to solidify their city's identification with Rome. In view of this evidence, it is not surprising that a higher than usual percentage of the names in Paul's circle in Corinth are Latin.

That being said, it is also not surprising that Paul wrote the letters in Greek. (Although Paul was likely a hereditary Roman citizen as Acts claims, this datum does not require his fluency in Latin; he grew up in the Greek-speaking East.) Even in Rome, educated Romans studied Greek language and culture;[16] still less could mercantile Corinth ignore its environment. Furthermore, despite its traditional base of Roman colonists, the city drew many immigrants from Greece and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean; most other Roman colonies had large populations that were not even Roman citizens. When Clement of Rome later wrote to the church in Corinth, he, like Paul before him, wrote in Greek. By the early second century C.E., Greek again became the city's official language, suggesting that the undercurrent of Greek language and culture had persisted.[17] Most relevantly, the congregation's likely Jewish and God-fearing Gentile founding center (cf. Acts 18:4) probably spoke Greek, as most Jews in Rome did. Understanding Paul's correspondence with Corinth requires knowledge of both Greek and Roman elements.

Corinth was widely known for its wealth in antiquity.[18] Its location on the Isthmus had long involved Corinth in trade (Thucydides 1.13.2, 5; Strabo 8.6.20), and some of our earliest references to the city portray wealth (Homer *Il.* 13.663–64). Local banking, artisans, and finally the current provincial seat would have further augmented the city's wealth. Despite the wide disparity between rich and poor that existed throughout the Empire, Corinth was particularly noteworthy for this problem (Alciphron *Parasites* 24.3.60, ¶1).[19] One particularly wealthy neighborhood was the Craneion.[20] Both excavations and inscriptions reveal that Corinth's prosperity had multiplied in the period between Augustus and Nero, that is, in the generations immediately preceding Paul's arrival.

Most Christians in Corinth were not well-to-do (1 Cor 1:26). But because nine of seventeen individuals Paul names there were on travels, it is a reasonable surmise that those named, who were probably particularly influential, were

16 Cf., for example, Suet. *Claud.* 42; *Nero* 7.2. Both Musonius and Marcus Aurelius chose Greek as the language for their philosophic discourse, although Seneca preferred Latin.

17 See R. M. Grant, *Paul in the Roman World: the Conflict at Corinth* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 19; R. A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 25; cf. J. H. Kent, *The Inscriptions 1926–1950*, 8.3 in *Corinth* (Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 18.

18 Cf. Strabo *Geogr.* 8.6.19–20; *Greek Anthology* 6.40; for old Corinth, for example, Pindar *Ol.* 13.4.

19 Archaeology, however, reveals a range between rich and poor in Corinth (D. Jongkind, "Corinth in the First Century AD: The Search for Another Class," *TynB* 52 [2001]: 139–48).

20 It was also known in old Corinth (Xenophon *Hell.* 4.4.4; Plutarch *Alex.* 14.2). A Corinthian suburb provided an obvious example of wealth (Martial *Epig.* 5.35.3).

persons of means. This is especially clear in view of Erastus's office (Rom 16:23) and if Rom 16:23 means that Gaius hosted the entire church in his home. We cannot be sure whether Erastus was free or freed (or possibly even a public slave), hence what his status would have indicated in traditional Roman class distinctions; but in Corinth money defined status to some degree even for freedmen, and most likely he was free and purchased the office.

Condescending below appropriate status boundaries might be praiseworthy in terms of showing mercy but was considered shameful in terms of social intercourse.[21] Some other thinkers had challenged traditional class distinctions, though such challenges were apparently declining.[22] For Corinth's sexual reputation, see "A Closer Look" on 6:12–21.

Our only narrative (and only extra-Pauline) source for the church in Corinth is a limited passage in Acts (18:1–18). Although some dispute Luke's accuracy, the points of agreement are considerable; they are also often on secondary rather than primary points, suggesting that Luke wrote independently of any knowledge of the Corinthian correspondence.[23] According to Acts, the Corinthian church began in a synagogue (Acts 18:5–8); although this fits a pattern in Acts, it also helps explain (along with Paul's extended stay there, 18:11) Paul's ability to assume basic knowledge of biblical stories in his correspondence.

THE PARTICULAR SITUATION AND PAUL'S RESPONSE IN 1 CORINTHIANS

Although the majority of scholars still find at least two letters in 2 Corinthians, most commentators accept the unity of 1 Corinthians.[24] Whereas other ancient sources provide a fairly clear picture of life in ancient Corinth, it is especially from the letters themselves that we must reconstruct the particular situations that elicited them. Recent scholarship has challenged older reconstructions based on "mirror-reading," but some of the situation, at least, seems fairly clear. In the past, many suggested different "parties" in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 1:12) with diverging theologies (those who argued for Gnosticism in Corinth particularly favored this view). Today, scholars are more apt to emphasize divisions over favorite teachers and their styles (although for Paul any division warrants a theological critique).

[21] For example, Polybius 26.1.1–3, 12; Livy 41.20.1–3; Apuleius *Metam.* 10.23; Sir 13:2. But cf. Suetonius *Tit.* 8.2.

[22] T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 76.

[23] See further L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sacra Pagina 5; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Michael Glazier, 1992), 325; B. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 537.

[24] For a thorough answer to remaining detractors, see M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1991).

New issues arose after Paul left Corinth. Although Paul may lack "opponents" in 1 Corinthians, some Corinthians do wish to "evaluate" or "examine" him (1 Cor 9:3), a matter to which he is sensitive (2:14–15; 4:3).[25] Although neither Paul nor Apollos encouraged division (cf. 1 Cor 16:12), informal "schools" apparently formed around them in Paul's, and probably Apollos's, absence.

Audiences regularly evaluated speakers' rhetoric, and students chose teachers and defended them vigorously; this set the stage for the sorts of divisions in 1 Corinthians 1–4. Apollos's spoken rhetoric was superior to Paul's (although Paul's argumentation in his letters was skillful; 2 Cor 10:10). Like philosophers, however, Paul contended that his content (his "wisdom") mattered more than its form (1 Cor 1:17–2:10). The church ought to stop evaluating them by worldly (i.e., rhetorical) standards; only God's day of judgment would properly evaluate God's servants (1 Cor 3:13–4:5). Like a philosopher, Paul proved his character and provided a model by a hardship list (1 Cor 4:11–13).

As noted earlier, even if some have exaggerated Corinth's reputation for lewdness, male Gentile sexual behavior diverged significantly from biblical standards. That Paul must address Corinthian questions about sexuality and marriage, raised by their letter (1 Cor 7:1; perhaps 6:12–13) and reports about them (1 Cor 5:1), is not surprising. This topic also occasions a digression about church discipline, modeled after the intracommunity discipline allowed synagogues as communities of resident aliens (1 Cor 5:4–6:8).

Jews had long recognized both sexual immorality and food offered to idols as characteristic of pagan religion (cf. 1 Cor 10:7–8). The poor consumed the latter especially at religious festivals, and the well-to-do encountered both more regularly at banquets. Paul warns against knowingly eating food offered to idols in part because it could damage other believers' faith (1 Cor 8), and offers himself as an example of foregoing rights for others' sake (1 Cor 9). He opposes it, second, because the spirits the pagans worshiped in the idols are demons (1 Cor 10:20). After a digression about one matter of propriety (specifically, about women's head coverings) at Christian gatherings (which included meals), Paul turns to another, namely the meaning and consequent conduct of the Lord's supper (Ch. 11).

Continuing his discussion of propriety in the assembly, Paul turns to the proper use of spiritual gifts. The Corinthians apparently learned about most spiritual gifts, including tongues (14:18), from Paul's own practice. Because some were using tongues publicly in the assembly in a way that did not edify others, Paul emphasizes using gifts only to build up Christ's body (Chs. 12–14).

Strategically, Paul reserves his most important *theological* issue for his climax: the resurrection (Ch. 15; cf. 1:7). Many Greek philosophers emphasized the soul's

[25] The term appears nine times in 1 Corinthians and nowhere else in Pauline literature. Greek culture was intensely critical; for example, dramatists criticized heroes and even deities. Lamentation criticized deities more often than in OT analogies.

immortality, and none affirmed a future for the body; like other Jewish thinkers, Paul connected a future judgment in the body with moral living in the present (6:13–14; 15:32–33, 56–58; cf. 4:5). After addressing the life of the congregation itself, Paul concludes the letter with the collection, a letter of recommendation, and the epistolary closing (Ch. 16).

We cannot say for certain that all of the problems in the church were related, but it is possible that some socially "strong" elite members had initiated many of the problems. It was certainly they whom Paul accused of dishonoring the Lord's Supper (11:21–22). It was probably they who objected to wearing head coverings; preferred Apollos to Paul; most frequently ate meat hence found idol food least objectionable; and offered the philosophic rejection of the body's importance that required Paul's response (6:13–14; ch. 15). It also may have been they who faced sexual temptations at banquets or sponsored the philosophic defense of sex without marriage. That they also authored the division over tongues (perhaps adding it to their gifts in rhetorically skilled speech) also has been proposed, although the evidence appears more ambivalent.